

## NOTES ON PHÆDON

BY MELVILLE H. HATCH

Dr. H. C. Fall (Pan-Pac. Ent., V, 1929, pp. 145-152) has pronounced invalid the nine new species of *Phædon* that I described (l. c., 1928, pp. 44-47, 59-62). Of these Mr. Charles Schæffer (Bull. Brook. Ent. Soc., XXIV, 1929, pp. 286-287) has declared *P. carri* Hatch valid. For the present, *P. vancouverensis* Hatch can likewise be considered distinct. It is separated from *oviformis* Lec. by characters of no less moment than those considered valid by Schæffer; Fall, moreover, was unable to report intermediates between it and *oviformis*.

Since Dr. Fall asserts that he has seen intermediates, *P. punctatus* and *vandykei* Hatch can be regarded as varieties of *prasinella* Lec., and *dietrichi* Hatch a variety of *viridis* Melsh. (*æruuginosus* Suffr.; *microreticulatus* Hatch\*). These differ by clear-cut characters, and, until the matter can be given more detailed study than Dr. Fall has obviously given it, the progress of our knowledge is better served by keeping the several varieties separated. As a third member of the *viridis* group, I announce the var. **oklahomensis** nov. It is characterized by the almost complete obsolescence from the interstriae of both rugosity and micropunctulation and by the very fine punctation of the disk of the pronotum. The type is from Chickasha, Oklahoma, in my collection.

The case of *P. niger* Hatch † is difficult. It is most closely related to *americanus* Schæffer (*armoraciæ* Hatch and Fall, nec L.) and it must replace that name if it be eventually proved to be conspecific with it. It is characterized by jet-black elytra and convex interstriae, and I have two specimens that fulfill

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\* Dr. Fall intimates that I was not entitled to rely on the published descriptions of *viridis* Melsh. and *purpurea* Linnell (*purpurescens* Hatch) but that I was under obligation to consult the types. I can admit no such obligation. Species exist not by virtue of the characteristics inherent in the type, but by virtue of such of those characteristics as have been published. When specimens exist that differ from published descriptions of previously described species in reasonably definite fashion the obligation is to describe them as new. The occasional synonymy so produced is much preferable to the announcement of really new species under old names—a practice that, at best, is frequently unavoidable.

† Dr. Fall's proposal to ignore the type of this form is reminiscent of the reputed habit of the older naturalists of throwing out specimens that didn't "fit." How much of the clarity for which Dr. Fall's monographs are so justly famous has been obtained at the price of the suppression of a portion of the data?

both these requirements. *Americanus* is characterized by more or less metallic elytra and flat interstriae. A third form, which I name *planus* sp. nov. (Type and four paratypes: King County, Washn., Evans Creek, May 11, 1929. M. H. Hatch, in my collection), is characterized by jet-black elytra and flat interstriae. So far I have not taken *americanus*, as above defined, in western Washington, and it is possible that *planus* replaces it in this area. All three of these forms possess a nearly similar elytral microsculpture, are closely related, and may eventually be shown to be varieties or subspecies of a single species.

Two corrections in my second paper on *Phædon* (l. c., pp. 59-60) should be noted. The division "A<sup>2</sup>" of my table should read "elytral intervals not microreticulate." *Cochleariæ* L. is erroneously included under the species without a series of larger punctures on the second interstria, although the larger punctures are very faintly indicated in my material which, moreover, exhibits a definite transverse rugosity of the interstriae.

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#### SWARMING OF TWO SPECIES OF DIPTERA

On March 22, 1931, while collecting by the Salinas River at Templeton, Monterey County, California, I noted an unusual gathering of *Odontomyia pilosa* Day. They were swarming on a cluster of stones projecting a little above the surface of the water, there being perhaps one or two hundred individuals altogether. Some were resting on the stones while others flew back and forth close over them with a rather loud humming noise, much like that produced by certain Bombyllids when hovering; perhaps a mating flight.

On the bank near where these Stratomyids were gathered was a patch of *Bæria chrysostoma* on the flowers of which were great numbers of the little Bombyllid, *Ploas atratula* Loew. This species is always common on these *Bæria* flowers, but I have never seen them in anything like such numbers.—  
E. P. Van Duzee.